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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000303

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI UPDATES U.S. AND UK AMBASSADORS

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) In an April 10 meeting, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai acknowledged the problematic nature of recent farm invasions and the continuing presence of Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor Gideon Gono. He noted that his personal situation had removed him from the fray for three weeks. He planned to meet with Zimbabwean President Mugabe to attempt to resolve these issues. Tsvangirai commented that the Victoria Falls ministerial retreat had been a success; 100-day plans for different sectors had been formulated, and he planned to travel throughout Zimbabwe and internationally to communicate progress of the new government. He believed that the ZANU-PF patronage machine had collapsed and that ZANU-PF ministers were beginning to realize that the transitional process was irreversible. Resources were still a problem; bumping up civil service allowances from US\$100 to US\$150 would go a long way toward weakening ZANU-PF. Finally, Tsvangirai believed Emmerson Mnangagwa was targeting him and others and was a primary threat to the new government. END SUMMARY.

Farm Invasions, Gono, and Political Detainees

¶2. (C) Tsvangirai requested the meeting with Ambassador and UK Ambassador Andrew Pocock to review the progress of the new government. He noted he had been away from work for the better part of three weeks, had not seen Mugabe, and therefore had not been able to deal with outstanding issues including recent farm invasions and the status of Gono. The Ambassador remarked that the farm invasions and Gono were overshadowing progress of the government and were leaving a negative impression of the new government and its ability to deal with problems in Washington. Failure to deal with them would hamper reengagement. Tsvangirai understood and said he

would discuss this directly with Mugabe.

¶3. (C) The Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) had researched the farm invasions, according to Tsvangirai. Since farms of MDC supporters had almost all already been seized, the latest invasions were directed at farms covered by Bilateral Protection and Promotion Agreements (BIPPA) or those occupied by whites with political connections. Tsvangirai concluded that they were spearheaded by ZANU-PF elements intent on subverting the new government.

¶4. (C) Tsvangirai averred that the MDC had damning information that Gono had transferred US\$100 million from the RBZ into a personal account and that his deputy, Munyaradzi Kereke, had transferred US\$75 million. The MDC was intent on forcing Gono out of the RBZ. Gono was a "home boy" of Tsvangirai from the same village and had been trying to see Tsvangirai for some time. Tsvangirai said he now intended to meet with Gono and tell him that an immediate resignation might forestall criminal prosecution.

¶5. (C) On the issue of political detainees, Tsvangirai said the last three political detainees had been granted bail but, in violation of the Inter-Party Political Agreement, the State had appealed, resulting in continuing detention until the appeal was heard in mid-April. In addition to Mugabe, Tsvangirai said he would raise this issue with Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa.

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Victoria Falls Retreat

¶6. (C) The retreat had been a success, according to Tsvangirai. All ministers, with the exception of hard-liners Emmerson Mnangagwa, Didymus Mutasa, and Joseph Made (who claimed to be ill), attended. "Bonding" had occurred between ZANU-PF and MDC ministers. A 100-day plan had been produced by clusters of related ministries. After the adoption of the plan by Cabinet, Tsvangirai said he would travel throughout Zimbabwe to communicate it to people in cities and villages. He would then travel internationally to discuss the progress of the government and its needs. Tsvangirai concluded that, although a transitional process would never be perfect, the ZANU-PF patronage machinery had collapsed and most ZANU-PF ministers now realized the transitional process was irreversible.

Resources Still a Concern

¶7. (C) Tsvangirai said there was growing dissatisfaction with US\$100 allowances for civil servants. (NOTE: Teachers are threatening to strike in May. END NOTE.) An adjustment to perhaps US\$150 could help resolve this. Failure to make an adjustment would play into the hands of ZANU-PF, which was looking for avenues to criticize the MDC.

Security Still a Concern

¶8. (C) Without being specific as to the nature of the threat, Tsvangirai said there were rumors that he, Tendai Biti, Elton Mangoma, and Roy Bennett were being targeted by Emmerson Mnangagwa. Both ambassadors suggested that after consultation with their respective capitals, a message could be passed to Mnangagwa through intermediaries that he would be held personally responsible should anything happen to these MDC officials.

COMMENT

¶9. (C) The Herald announced in its Friday edition that the Information Communication Technology ministry headed by Nelson Chamisa had been stripped of postal and telecommunications portfolios which were transferred to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure headed by ZANU-PF's Nicholas Goche. Tsvangirai was apparently unaware of this when he talked with us. He subsequently told the press the action was "illegal." This is another issue for him to raise with Mugabe -- and another example of the lack of good will of ZANU-PF, both in the action it took and the fact it did not alert Tsvangirai of what it intended to do.

¶10. (C) While Tsvangirai at times appears over-optimistic, he is also quick to point out that this is a transitional process. The realist in him pointed out that right after the "bonding" experience of Victoria Falls, Mugabe endorsed the continuing farm invasions. As we have noted, this is not a government of national unity but a fitful marriage of convenience. We also bear in mind that the government is only two-months old, and Tsvangirai has been away for three weeks of that time. The next month to two months should give us a better indication of what can and cannot be accomplished. END COMMENT.

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MCGEE